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ABSTRACT

Discourse analysis of an interview with a Mexican American immigrant mother concerning her children's education in the United States and her relationship with the school provides an understanding of the adaptations of an immigrant in organizational relationships and how language reflects and influences those interactions. The model of discourse analysis used is concerned with the way participants choose from a range of language strategies and manage the discourse. Senora Mercedes uses four levels of discourse, at one level referring to general, abstract social conditions and relationships, at another level creating a speech event by structuring the conversation with a stranger, at a third level using language to discuss shared concerns with the interviewer, and at a fourth level, embedded in the interview, retelling past events and interactions. These four levels are interdependent, with changes in context or level appearing spontaneously and marked only by changes in speech style. The various fields of discourse constantly interact and overlap in the interview. Language here represents Sra Mercedes' experiences, surroundings, and the processes of her consciousness, while also expressing her participation in a speech event. At the various levels, her responses represent varying, sometimes conflicting perspectives of interaction with the school, both supportive and apprehensive, complimentary and critical. (MSE)

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SRA. MERCEDES: A MEXICAN IMMIGRANT PARENT

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Foreign workers frequently comprise a significant proportion of the labor force in industrialized countries, especially in urban areas. Economic, demographic and social factors continue to bring about migration which perpetuates linguistic diversity and provokes numerous dilemmas in communication, education and social relations in highly urbanized societies. In the United States, as well as in other countries, immigrant workers have become an integral part of the production system. Many may be expected to remain permanently in the host country, even though few have that intention when they first arrive. Increasingly, immigrant workers bring their families with them or send for family members as soon as jobs are secured.

Castles and Kosack (1973) discuss immigrant workers and class structure and consider two strata within the working class: majority workers, with generally better conditions and the feeling of no longer being right at the bottom of society, and the minority and immigrant groups who are the most underprivileged and exploited of society. The study finds that educational opportunities are extremely restricted for immigrant workers, who rarely get vocational training permitting promotion beyond the semiskilled level. Immigrant children face educational difficulties such as shock and bewilderment caused by being cast into the midst of strange teachers and children at school and having to cope with learning the new language as well as academic skills. As a result most immigrant children are unlikely to reach the same educational standard as the majority children. Castles and Kosack argue that it is obviously not in the interest of the class in power to follow policies that would encourage the promotion of immigrant workers and their children, as this would remove the supply of cheap unskilled labor. Thus, whether those families are permanent or temporary immigrants, if they are racially and linguistically distinct, they tend to remain identifiable. Their children, as well, remain outside the mainstream of society even though many of them reside permanently in the host country and may have largely adopted the language, values and customs of the receiving society.

One traditional way of looking at the effects of such migrations has been the concept of "marginal man" proposed by Robert E. Park (1928). Park suggested that migration detached individuals and groups from traditional restraints and supports and cast them into a marginal position full of personal turmoil and potential social disorganization. These ideas were expanded by Stonequist (1937) who argued that:

> The making of a new racial and national identification is forced by the violent emotional reaction against the old. The old identification, however, though bruised and shattered continues to exist and troubles the mind.

This conception of the marginal and distraught immigrant (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937) is frequently invoked when discussing the problems of migrant workers. However, more recent studies of immigrants and their ethnic communities suggest that while economic marginality and host society prejudices and exploitation create conflicts, few immigrants live in a constant or even significant state of marginality. Galovensky (1952) suggests that multiple loyalties need not be conflicting or disorganizing. He proposes that the average person under favorable conditions can make many complex adjustments without sacrificing mental balance and emotional security. Elías-Olivares (1980) and Gumperz (1971) suggest that bilinguals and those who shift easily from one language context to another increase options and alternatives in social relationships rather than increasing "violent emotional reactions."

Tilly (1967) argues that transitional groups such as kinship groups cushion the shock of immigration by maintaining extensive personal relations and contact among kinfolk and by serving as auspices of migration--the social structures which establish relationships between the migrants and the host community before the point of immigration.

In this paper I suggest that the transfer of skills, knowledge and power appropriate for dealing with major urban institutions is another alternative to the concept of marginality. Key agents in this transfer of skills and knowledge are women of immigrant families who have responsibility for the day-to-day needs of family and children. These women must adapt their own experiences, skills and knowledge to form a frame of reference in terms of which to relate to institutions which affect their families.

Many of these immigrant women do not speak English. Understandably, inability to communicate in the language used in the majority of the

institutions of the country and in mainstream social interactions presents difficulties. Gumperz (1971) suggests that linguistic interaction is a decision-making process in which speakers select from a range of possible expressions reflecting contextual and social differences. This range is somewhat limited because speakers must select among accepted ways of formulating messages to convey the meanings that they wish to convey and must also be concerned with appropriateness for the situation, persons addressed, topic, speech event, etc. Thus, the more one knows about a particular society and the range of personal repertoires of language skills and language varieties appropriate in that society, the more effectively one can communicate in it. Nonetheless, I propose that these immigrant women show few of the marginal characteristics suggested by Park and Stonequist. Instead, in day-to-day negotiations they actively adapt skills, knowledge, and experiences to deal with host society institutions.

The host country school system is one of those institutions which represents an organizational context in which the disjuncture between values, culture and language of immigrants and those of the new social and cultural environment is at a maximum. This is especially true in countries like the United States where the schools are looked to as a major agent in the assimilation of newcomers. Problems center on urban schools: the quality, length and availability of bilingual classes; the pedagogical and didactic problems of language instruction; the degree of significance placed by the work country or the home country on mother tongue and culture; access to adequate education and training; and a low rate of school success.

Labov (1968) has shown that compensatory educational programs directed at immigrant and minority children are often based on the "marginal" model which assumes that the home situation of these children cannot provide a rich educational environment. Many of these programs are influenced by the stereotypic attitude that immigrant parents who have little formal education themselves do not value education and do not pass motivation for learning on to their children. It is assumed that these parents assist their children little, either in general, cultural terms or in specific tasks like homework (Aguirre, 1968).

Immigrants in the United States, and especially Mexican immigrants, have historically served as pools of cheap unskilled labor. In prosperous times Mexican immigrants have been actively recruited to meet United States

agricultural and industrial needs. Many of those immigrant workers remain in the United States, bring their families to join them, and eventually have children who enter United States schools. Those immigrant parents who experience an economic change for the better as a result of their migration, despite institutional inadequacies for the education of their children, show a great concern with the achievement of their offspring. Parents hope that education can improve the status of their children, and the family becomes an active agent of change (Rosen, 1973). Consequently, the women of those families must rely on their own background skills and sometimes minimal school experiences to help their children.

All mothers interviewed for this study had high aspirations for their children and saw education as a possible means of social and occupational mobility for their offspring even if they returned to Mexico. Many of the mothers did feel inadequate in helping their children in schoolwork in English and in interacting with school personnel when they did not speak or understand English well or when they had little formal education. Yet all of these mothers encouraged their children to study and do well and provided assistance in areas in which they had some skill or knowledge. Reflecting the influence of the sociceconomic position of immigrant parents, most of these mothers brought with them from Mexico a general set of cultural values toward school in which teachers are held in high esteem and their professional knowledge and authority are unquestionable. Most believed that the existing school system held the prospect of fulfilling their needs and aspirations for their children. Thus they embraced the power and social relationships existing within the schools that framed their lives.

Sra. Mercedes and her family followed such a pattern. Her interview was selected for analysis after considerable field observations of parents in the schools in an attempt to assure some representativeness across participants, setting, and socioeconomic group and in an effort to present some of the major conflicts faced by immigrant mothers and their children in host country schools.[1] While the experiences of this woman are not generalizable to all immigrant mothers and one cannot draw broad conclusions from her experiences, the thoughts and strategies represented in her discourse can provide an understanding of the adaptations of an immigrant in organizational relationships and how language reflects and influences those interactions.

I use a problem-solving model of discourse analysis to understand the experiences of Sra. Mercedes as they are reported in an interview. The interview shows that social structures are both interactional and ideal, but they are socially constituted. Sra. Mercedes and the researcher construct the interview through interactions and negotiations. Many of Sra. Mercedes' perceptions of the school and teachers are ideal structures of parent-school interactions derived from her experiences in Mexico which, combined with day-to-day activities in specific interactional environments in the United States, shape her knowledge of "what is happening" to her children in the schools. Observing formal and informal language shifts as markers,[2] I focus on the functions of language in embedded organizational, interactional, and situated contexts. At the organizational level of reality, the interview reflects the perspective particular to a Mexican immigrant parent interacting with teachers in United States schools. At another level, the interview itself is a speech event adroitly handled by the subject. Within the interview, retellings replay Sra. Mercedes' experiences in the schools and represent natural events and natural discourse. Appropriately, this paper is about an immigrant mother who uses her own experiences to construct positive school experiences for her children. It is about an interview as an interactionally constituted speech event, and it is about the use of language in discourse.

A MODEL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The study of social interaction presupposes that participants possess some broad capabilities that can be glossed as interactional competence. Gumperz (1971, 1976, 1977), Mehan (1980), Cosaro (1980) and Cicourel (1975, 1976, 1979) have used recordings of social interaction as a point of departure for an analysis of a group's activities. A common thread running through this scholarship is the view of the reasoning used by participants as transcending the actual talk analyzed. Since language is deeply embedded in almost all social processes, a sociolinguistic analysis of discourse can provide a deep and rich understanding of social interaction and the important tacit assumptions and implicit categories employed by individuals coping with their environments. It is the most ordinary, everyday uses of language that serve to transmit the essential qualities of society and the nature of social being.

I propose that an approach which attempts to account for shared meaning from the way participants structure a situation and the way they use language in socially significant contexts is needed in discourse analysis. I am concerned with the way participants choose from a range of possible language strategies and manage concerted activity by constantly informing and conforming each other to whatever it is that has to happen next. Thus actors manage to know what is going on in relation to specific interactional environments which they have helped to construct (R.P. McDermott, 1978; Mehan, 1977, 1978).

In a problem-solving model of discourse analysis proposed by Cicourel (1979), the interpretation of meaning always depends on intuitions about language and an understanding of how participants construct and organize their environments. Yet, those meanings are part of a complex, multilevel setting and must be grounded by ethnomethodological field study of participants in day-to-day activities. Cicourel argues that the study of interviews and other interactional settings is always part of more complex sociocultural analysis which specifies constraints for an analysis of discourse and textual material. He proposes that we conceive of discourse as an overall "story" in which are embedded several sub-stories or themes or topics, in which higher levels of predication are presupposed in the gathering of discourse materials. These levels require that we pay explicit attention to organizational, group, or bureaucratic occasions when routine transfers of information must occur. By focusing on occasions which are central to an organization's or group's everyday existence, we are in a position to document how organizational or group events, activities, or rules are used by members to pursue goals, implement plans, express disagreements, request information, identify status and role problems and invoke institutional values and norms.

The model used for the analysis of Sra. Mercedes' interview is strongly influenced by these perspectives. An attempt was made to use Cicourel's problem-solving model and to expand the interview by bringing together all information that could help in understanding the speech event, the organizational and social contexts of language strategies used and the interpretation of the discourse. Thus, this paper includes:

1. Both top-down theoretical assumptions as a guide and bottom-up data-suggested theoretical implications in the analysis.
2. Selection of discourse within an organizational setting--the school.

3. Compilation of ethnographic information about the organizational context derived from participant observation, participation in parent-school events, and from interviews with fourteen other Mexican immigrant mothers whose experiences and responses could be compared and contrasted with those of Sra. Mercedes.
4. Insights of an informant of background experiences similar to those of Sra. Mercedes which verified the researcher's translations, interpretations, and conclusions and provided additional data from the immigrant mother perspective.
5. Expansion of discourse by introducing material from various segments of the interview, from the interview as a whole, and from outside the interview when that material was significant in determining meaning or perspective (Labov and Fanshel, 1977).
6. A summary of the chronology of data gathering and of the interview as a whole to provide an account of the way the analysis was accomplished and merged with external sources of information.
7. Focus on language functions, on what Sra. Mercedes and the interviewer are trying to do with language in this speech event rather than on turn-taking, sequence or other speech act variables (M.A.K. Halliday, 1969, 1974, 1975; Hymes, 1974).

In the following pages I present a more in-depth analysis of the Sra. Mercedes interview supported by data from a transcript of the interview itself. I begin with a brief chronology of the data collection and a summary of the interview as a whole. Then I discuss the interview context, devoting special attention to interactions that are central to the interpretation of the interview. Next I focus on discourse material from the interview, suggesting that Sra. Mercedes brings to the school situation her own background knowledge, skills and experiences from Mexico that she adapts to accomplish the interview and to meet the many demands of helping her children in their new environment. She uses language in ways which reflect the constantly constituted and changing roles and relationships within particular situated, organizational, and interactional contexts.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE DATA COLLECTION

In order to establish a general ethnographic framework of an immigrant mother's experience with the schools, fifteen Spanish-speaking mothers from

Mexico were interviewed. Socioeconomic level was a variable controlled to a degree by selecting mothers from one geographic elementary school attendance area in a California community serving basically lower-income families near the Mexican border. The formal educational experiences of these women, even in Mexico, were limited; only four had attended some school in the United States and none had graduated from high school. Sra. Mercedes and the others interviewed represent mothers who were already to some extent involved in the school, which is a bias in the sample. (This could theoretically mean that mothers with few school contacts who are not involved in the school experiences of their children might experience marginality problems that do not apply to this sample.)

An interview guide was used to encourage the women to talk about personal experiences of participating in the school activities of their elementary school age children. The substantive intent of the interview was to determine in what ways Spanish-speaking mothers participate in the school education of their young children--how they feel about the activities they become involved in, how they deal with problems and difficulties they encounter, and how that participation relates to the educational progress of their children.

The Sra. Mercedes interview was selected from fifteen interviews for a closer analysis of the interview text. The experiences and concerns she expressed were representative of those of the other immigrant mothers. Despite a somewhat reserved participation in the school activities which I observed and despite her difficulties with English, she was an active agent of her family in contacts with the schools.

A paid informant, a Mexican immigrant mother of background experiences similar to those of Sra. Mercedes who had organized and trained parents to participate in school activities provided assistance in establishing authenticity of the interpretation and analysis of the interview. She also provided additional ethnographic information concerning an immigrant mother's perspective of school activities and relationships. After listening to the taped interview, she corrected the interviewer's version of the transcript for authenticity of Spanish and typed the transcript. She then discussed the Sra. Mercedes interview and transcript with the researcher in a tape-recorded session. In each of these stages the informant made comments regarding her impressions of the interview, her own experiences in comparison with those of Sra. Mercedes, and Sra. Mercedes' use of lexicon and styles of Spanish.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE INTERVIEW

The interview begins with general informational questions about number of children, grade levels of children, and kinds of activities that Sra. Mercedes has participated in at the school. The issue of language is immediately brought up by Sra. Mercedes as a factor in participation. She explains, "me siento media corta" (p. 30, line 17); she feels inadequate attempting to communicate with teachers who do not speak Spanish and has to take her child with her as a translator. She describes providing services or food for school social functions and money-making projects in which she has participated but explains that she cannot get more personally involved, "no puedo cooperar con mi persona" (p. 31, line 21) because of family responsibilities.

Emphasizing that she always goes to parent-teacher conferences, Sra. Mercedes retells dialogues with various teachers who claim her children are advancing but talk too much in class.[3] In these replayed narratives, she frequently contradicts the teachers and advises them in handling these difficulties. At the same time she emphasizes that the teachers know the children, frequently better than parents, and asserts that the teachers' competence is unquestionable.

At this point in the interview she begins to interact more informally and describes her children bringing home schoolwork and waiting until too late at night or the next morning to do it, causing the father to intervene. Describing her attempt to help her son do long division, she tells how she used her own math skills to help. In a retold dialogue with the boy, she lectures that learning her way will enable him to solve any problem he might encounter. In these retellings she interjects numerous asides and humorous-critical comments regarding United States' methods of instruction.[4]

Although she has never attended United States schools, Sra. Mercedes explains that she knows what goes on; she hears about fighting and other problems. Her children are warned not to get involved because such misconduct would humiliate her. Bragging that she has never had a problem with the schools, she rationalizes that if there were problems, school personnel would contact her. Discussion of problems recalls an incident with a reading teacher involving the issue of language of instruction. Her son who spoke little English was reported to be reading in English but not understanding what he read. Sra. Mercedes argued for instruction first in the boy's "national language" (p. 34, ll. 18-20) and later English. She

reported that the teacher listened to her suggestion and the boy did well. Afterward the teacher recognized the appropriateness of Sra. Mercedes' recommendation which validated her feelings of adequacy as a knowledgeable parent.

A question about English language classes changed the topic to Sra. Mercedes' own language learning difficulties. She explains that she was embarrassed to try to speak English because she knew only words and phrases and preferred to use Spanish. She gives an example of an English class recitation, inserting the few English words with which she felt comfortable in the dialogue, but finds it difficult to continue in English.

When the interviewer brings the topic back to school activities in a question about the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Sra. Mercedes explains that she has attended some meetings and praises the PTA for providing clothes, eyeglasses and food for the poor, which her family fortunately has not needed. School activities are the only places that Sra. Mercedes ever sees or talks to school personnel and these meetings are looked to as a means of communicating with teachers. She explains that she participates in few outside activities besides those at the school, although she takes her children to the church to prepare for choir first communion. She emphasizes that the measure of the teachers is in the work of the students. If the student is not learning, it is because the child has been distracted. Sra. Mercedes responds perfunctorily to questions about why others do not participate in school activities, speculating that each has his own reason--some only come to be seen by others, some are embarrassed to come, some are not interested or do not have time.

She explains at this point in the interview that she has been at the present school six years and some children are with teachers that taught older brothers and sisters. She praises this particular school because of its bilingual classes and expresses a hope that all children will leave the school bilingual, even the American children. However, she realistically acknowledges that one cannot leave all to the teachers. She concludes the interview with the hope that now that her children have learned in Spanish, they can continue to learn in English in higher grades where there are no bilingual classes.

STRATEGIES OF LANGUAGE USE

Firth (1966:92) has described language as "much more heterogeneous and disconnected than most of us would care to admit. We have, for instance, as many 'sub-sets' as there are special systems of behavior, special 'sets' of social attitudes linked up with specialized languages. A man may have a bundle of assorted 'sets,' he may be at times a local peasant villager, at other times all the 'set' of what is loosely called the educated class may take the stage."

Sra. Mercedes brings to the interview skills and knowledge which allow her to select from these sets and subsets of language to interact effectively. Shifts from formal to informal language styles imply that context and how Sra. Mercedes uses language are not simply given in the physical setting nor in combinations of persons in the interaction. Rather, contexts and language strategies are constituted by what people are doing, where they are doing it, and as her interview suggests, by larger frames of reference, perceptions of role relationships, and mental sets of experiences that the speakers bring to the situation.[5] These interactionally constituted environments change from moment to moment and are marked by type of activity going on, how participants are relating to one another, ways of speaking, ways of listening, changes in the tempo and tone of speech, changes in facial expression, choice of words and ways of organizing and presenting discourse. These environments or contexts are interrelated to what participants in the context of situation are actually doing with language and can be described as a "context within a context each one being an organ of the bigger context and all contexts finding a place in the context of culture"(Firth, 1964).

At one level within the interview, Sra. Mercedes reveals ideas concerning parent-teacher relationships and responsibilities, ambitions and expectations of her children, and linguistic dilemmas faced by immigrants. When she refers to these general social conditions and relationships, her discourse is characterized by discussion of abstract concepts rather than descriptions of specific incidents and her speech style is formal and impersonal. The situated contexts overlap with an organizational context in which Sra. Mercedes reports and describes everyday interactions and events within the schools.

At another level, the interaction of Sra. Mercedes and the researcher can be seen as a speech event. The interview represents routinized forms

of behavior, delineated by well-defined boundaries and well-defined sets of expected behaviors within those boundaries. It is a speech event in which one person, the interviewer, extracts information from another person, Sra. Mercedes. The interviewer initiated the event, and Sra. Mercedes volunteered to give information contained in her biography out of general interest or goodwill.

Although the interviewer attempts to relate to Sra. Mercedes in Spanish and shares her interests and concerns as a woman and mother, she remains a representative of the majority culture in the United States and is associated indirectly with educated professionals. This creates some ambiguity in the interview and seems to cause some of the shifting from formal interview style discourse to more informal interactional style discourse. When Sra. Mercedes responds in ways which indicate that she is directly answering interview questions in short sentences or concise phrases or when she lapses into routinized behaviors characteristic of an interview subject, that style of discourse is characterized as interview style. This style occurs most frequently at the beginning of Sra. Mercedes' responses and in codas summarizing responses. She often provides a direct answer to a question and then elaborates, bringing in her own experiences.

At a third level discourse reflects an interactional context when Sra. Mercedes uses language that serves to relate to the interviewer or that assumes a parallel degree of shared knowledge about the school in retold experiences. For example, Sra. Mercedes uses elliptic descriptions of United States and Mexican mathematic pedagogies assuming that she and the interviewer share information about how instruction takes place in both countries. Influenced by interactional traditions rooted in Mexican culture, she avoids direct criticisms and evaluations that might offend the researcher or school personnel, but makes those criticisms in interjections and reported dialogue. In other instances interactional speech serves to establish a comfortable, folksy relationship and to express personal feelings. Asides, tag questions, dialogues and other interactional utterances function to establish contact and familiarity with the interviewer.

At still another level, embedded within the interview, are retellings of past events and interactions. These retellings provide "natural" discourse within the interview. As Goffman (1974:504) has noted, replaying is not merely any reporting of a past event, but it is a statement made from the personal perspective of an actual or potential participant. A

replaying recounts a personal experience; it is not merely a report of an event. Reporting is commonly presented as something to re-experience, to dwell on, to savor, whatever the eventual action the presenter hopes the little show will induce the audience to undertake. When Sra. Mercedes engages in these performances, she conjures up scenes from her school interactions and quotes herself as she perceived she interacted in them, breaking the "frame" of the interview speech event.

Here Sra. Mercedes brings to the interview areas in which she is the undisputed expert--her personal emotions, actual experiences and events that make up her life. These retellings are characterized by the most informal style of discourse which is marked by contracted words, colloquial expressions, change in voice tone and pitch, and rapid speech.

None of these contexts operates independently of the others. Switches in context frequently occur within the same narrative and are identified only by switches in speech style. When Sra. Mercedes suddenly shifts from a narrative about her children's homework to an aside to the interviewer in which she makes an evaluation of United States math pedagogy, she demonstrates that the organizational context, interactional context and interview context exist almost simultaneously. In a situated context, as she contrasts her own experiences of learning math with those of her children in the United States schools, Sra. Mercedes illustrates how skills and knowledge from her home country are transferred to her interactions in the host country. She maintains rapport with the interviewer, softening an organizational criticism of United States instruction by embedding her evaluations in a narrative concerning a child's homework. Organizationally, she is asserting herself as one responsible for important decisions affecting the future of her children; interactionally, she is presenting herself as a parent who has taken the time and effort to get information necessary to make such decisions wisely and one who can effectively interact with school personnel; she is an immigrant mother evaluating the educational experiences of her children in the host country. Within this interview Sra. Mercedes demonstrates that knowledge of social relationships and social, interactional and problem-solving skills developed from her experiences in Mexico are constantly invoked in encounters in her immigrant environment. These encounters are multi-contextual with social and linguistic contexts merging in language behaviors and strategies.

What is found in the interview is a combination of the different roles and situations that Sra. Mercedes must confront as an immigrant mother. Her speech involves a combination of styles of discourse that allow her to discuss what is happening to her children and to present herself as one who is able to resolve the ambiguities and problems within the social reality facing them. Shifts in discourse style allow her to relate experiences, to reason logically, to be critical without confronting and to relate on a personal basis to the interviewer.[6] Her thoughts, experiences, and efforts to relate constitute constantly changing contexts which reflect her position as an interview subject, her efforts to interact socially, her experiences with her children in the schools, and her feelings and concerns as an immigrant mother. In the following pages material from the actual interview illustrates how the various contexts, language strategies, and experiences interrelate in the interaction.

In the interview context, both the interviewer--an Anglo middle-class woman introduced by school personnel--and the subject--a working-class Mexican immigrant mother--have rather well-defined social roles and are limited to the types of interactions that are expected within the school organizational setting. At the same time, the particular persons that play the parts of interviewer and subject are individuals whose characteristics and background experiences have a strong influence upon behaviors considered appropriate in such interactions. At several points in the interview, Sra. Mercedes included the researcher in the formal pronoun referent "usted" when referring to school personnel. For example, on page of the interview transcript (p. 32, ll. 31-34) Sra. Mercedes talks about being content with the teachers and refers to "los profesores" (the teachers) and "sus derechos" (their rights). However, she uses the formal second person pronoun "usted" (you) rather than the third person "ellos" (they) when referring to school personnel as being competent and responsible for her children. ("usted sabrá, usted es el responsable, usted haga lo que quiera...a usted, a usted, se los encargo." You are knowledgeable, you are the one responsible, you do what you wish...to you, to you I entrust my children) (p. 32, ll. 28-34).

Despite this contextually defined relationship, a sense of friendship and a relative status of persons not a part of the immediate school hierarchy was established in the interview. When Sra. Mercedes is responding as one who is being interviewed, her style is formal. When she relates to

the interviewer on a more personal level, she shifts into a more informal, interactional style of discourse. Shifts from informal to formal language varieties signal these shifts in relationship. For example, when explaining her son's math homework, Sra. Mercedes relates to the interviewer in a formal way and at the same time relates in an interactional way that assumes an informal relationship and shared understandings. ("Ai no, y yo de primero no le entendía...y ya después le agarré la onda..." (Ai no, and at first I did not understand it, and then I got it...) (p. 33, ll. 26-28).

At the beginning of this utterance is a colloquial interjection used informally with friends. Sra. Mercedes then shifts to a more formal explanation of the fact that at first she had not understood the methodology. Then, rather than continue with that formal variety which probably would have the same verb (y ya despues le entendí) (and then I understood), she switches to informal Spanish and uses the colloquial expression "le agarré la onda" (I caught on). She is relating to the interviewer in a comfortable, folksy manner when she uses colloquial expressions which express much more explicitly feelings about these experiences, and she assumes that the interviewer understands all that is implied.

Although interviews as particular speech events tend to inhibit colloquial language and performed conversational narrative that frequently occur in natural speech situations, Sra. Mercedes' interview contains many examples of retold narrative containing dialogue, asides, expressive sounds, repetition, sound effects, motions and gestures which Wolfson (1978) has defined as performed characteristics and which support the authenticity of the interview. The informant referred to interaction in the interview as it proceeded as similar to that which occurs between "comadres," very close friends related through a godparent relationship with children. This kind of interaction is marked by an open, folksy, familiar style of language.

The overall formality of the interview is mitigated to some degree by the fact that it was conducted in the subject's language. Here Sra. Mercedes has an advantage as a native speaker of the language. Dangling questions occur throughout the interview which allow the researcher to handle questions without the command of the language necessary to reformulate them. Sra. Mercedes frequently finished questions for the interviewer or began responding before questions were completely asked. These open questions allowed Sra. Mercedes to interpret questions in ways that she

could handle comfortably and afforded her a great deal of control in the interaction. Flexibility in defining the intent of the questions also seemed to temper the potential apprehension that could have been caused by questions concerned with school personnel and perceptions of the school. Additionally, the researcher was not a member of the immediate school staff, which seemed to make it easier to discuss school interactions.

Effects of the interview itself, the relationship of one question to another, shifts in topic, and preceding discourse, all contributed to some degree to the interview context and to shifts in language style. The interview has a well-defined beginning and ending where language use is formal and Sra. Mercedes and the researcher relate as interviewer and interview subject. The interview begins when the interviewer asks several biographical questions (p. 30, ll. 1-4) and is marked by the transition "Muy bien..." (very good...), a pause, and the beginning of a more personal tone of voice as the interviewer moves into the first substantive question of the interview (p. 30, line 5). This transition is not as evident for the respondent who continues to answer in short phrases and does not begin to elaborate or to use informal expressions such as "verdad" until several lines later in the transcript (p. 30, line 11). From that point, the interview proceeds in a more informal manner characterized by longer narrative responses, more embedded dialogue, expressive and descriptive phrases and other characteristics of performed narrative.

The conclusion of the interview is marked once again by the interviewer's "Muy bien" (p. 38, line 43) and an evaluative statement defining Sra. Mercedes as a good parent. A question is asked to allow Sra. Mercedes to add anything about school participation that has not been addressed, and the interviewer thanks her for her time. Sra. Mercedes explains that she does her best with her children, and with Latino politeness asserts that her efforts were not troublesome, that it was the interviewer who dedicated time and effort to the project (p. 39, ll. 16, 18-19). These beginning and ending protocols trigger interview-style discourse which is formal and impersonal.

Another factor, the questions themselves, may have prompted changes in language style in parts of the interview. At times the interviewer was inconsistent in form of address (p. 30, line 24) (p. 32, ll. 1-2). Sra. Mercedes responded to the inconsistencies as errors which did not seem to affect her responses. However, when questions referred to more specific events such as homework, the adult English class, or teacher conferences,

they triggered narrative-style responses that contained performed dialogues, informal colloquial Spanish and personal experiences. When questions were more vague, such as "¿Cuando está en la clase o está visitando, está haciendo evaluaciones de la clase o de los maestros?" (When you are in the classroom or visiting, are you making evaluations of the class or of the teachers?) (p. 37, lines 6-7), answers tended to reflect discourse which was general and formal or interview style which referred directly to the question but was also formal. In some cases in which the interviewer intended the question to be general and hypothetical, such as "¿Si hubo unos problemas, un problema en la escuela, cómo va a comunicar con la escuela?" (If there were problems, a problem in the school, how are you going to communicate with the school?) (p. 34, lines 5-6), Sra. Mercedes interpreted the question as relating to specific situations or particular experiences, which then triggered the characteristics of informal, performed narrative. Additionally, there were frequent shifts in language style and language use within particular responses which could be considered undifferentiated wholes in the interview as a speech event.

Thus, although characteristics of the interview as a speech event cause some shifts in language style and context, those factors alone do not account for all the variations in language use in the interaction. Shifts occur within small segments of interaction, demonstrating that the various fields of discourse are constantly interacting and overlapping. Utterances frequently serve several functions simultaneously, as the ways that people are relating to one another change.

Some of the shifts in language style and the interaction of various fields of discourse not accounted for by the interview speech event are illustrated in an example from the transcript on page 33 in which Sra. Mercedes retells an incident in which her junior high school aged son asked for help in learning long division. As she narrates a previous dialogue with her son, her discourse serves to develop the image of herself as a helping mother, allows her to explore the relationship with the interviewer and enables her to interject evaluative statements about the United States' way of teaching mathematics. The use of informal colloquial language in the interjections (p. 33, ll. 19, 23, 25-26) affirms the comfortable, personal relationship established with the interviewer. The embedding of these rather strong criticisms in humorous folksy Spanish within the retelling of the incident concerning her son's difficulties with division

allows her to criticize United States pedagogy without directly affronting the interviewer. Expressing the criticisms as if they were told to her son and simply retold here mitigates possible negative effects of the evaluations.

She concludes the retelling with a comparison of Mexican and United States instructional strategies and a claim that in the United States students fill their papers with meaningless numbers rather than learning to think abstractly (p. 33, lines 19-26). Although Sra. Mercedes is careful of the way she makes these criticisms, they allow her to test the interviewer's concurrence or disagreement with her opinions and to explore a more informal relationship without putting herself in a position to be rebuked. The elliptical descriptions of both math systems demonstrate that Sra. Mercedes assumes that the interviewer and she share a knowledge of both systems. The interviewer does not contradict or question the descriptions and evaluations nor does she ask for more information. Instead, laughter and head nods confirm shared understandings and perspectives, allowing Sra. Mercedes to continue in the humorous, informal discourse.

In the next utterance (p. 33, ll. 26-7) Sra. Mercedes presents herself as one who was initially confused by the United States method of math computation but was able to figure it out herself. Thus she presents herself as a mother who is competent and capable of resolving problems even in unfamiliar United States schools. She softens this direct bragging, the presentation of herself as clever and responsible, by the use of informal, colloquial discourse. However, the description of the repeated multiplication and subtraction in the United States method of long division also serves to prove that she does indeed understand the methodology.

Reiterating that at first she had not understood the United States methodology, Sra. Mercedes explains that she used her own methods to help her son. In an embedded dialogue with her son, she advises him to learn his multiplication tables, claiming that following her way will enable him to solve any problems he might encounter. This demonstrates a reliance on experiences in Mexican schools and her own resources that she transfers in order to help her son do well in United States classes. She is in effect saying, "Don't worry about the strange customs here. Learn as I did and you will be able to solve any problems." She also warns her son that if he does not heed her advice and really study, he will go nowhere (p. 33, lines 31-34). A coda (p. 33, line 34) brings the

interaction back to the interviewer, with the "No," summing up her conclusion that her son will go nowhere unless he studies the multiplication tables and "pos sí" referring to the initial question affirming that she does learn from her children's work and that she is capable and willing to help them.

The detailed description of the math processes in this narrative demonstrates that Sra. Mercedes is very much involved in the work that her children are doing and actively helps them to cope with school. She presents herself as a mother who is able to overcome obstacles in her new environment and to figure out what her children must know in order to succeed. In this episode she makes direct criticisms of the United States educational system; but by presenting them in informal discourse embedded in retold dialogue, she monitors the effects of those criticisms.

While Sra. Mercedes emphasizes that she has not had any United States schooling herself, her evaluative statements demonstrate that she is contrasting her own school experiences with those of her children in the United States and is keeping well abreast of what is happening in the schools through the experiences of her children and her interactions with them.

In a similar response on page 34 of the transcript, Sra. Mercedes deals with the complex issue of the use of English versus the maintenance of their home language, Spanish. She refers to an interaction with her son's reading teacher. Using formal-interview style, Sra. Mercedes affirms that teachers are more knowledgeable than parents about school experiences of her children, explaining that if there were problems, the teachers would contact her (p. 34, lines 7-8). Yet she explains that she has not had problems because she attends school meetings where she talks with her children's teachers. The discussion of school problems and talks with teachers seems to trigger another context because the phrase (p. 34, ll. 13-14) "y pos él, pos, pronto aprendió el inglés, pero sabe leer" (and, well, he, well, he learned English quickly, but to read) does not refer to the teachers mentioned in previous discourse but to her son who learned to speak English quickly but could not read it well.

A pause gives the interviewer time to orient to the additional person, and Sra. Mercedes begins to describe a "problem" that occurred with the reading teacher. While Sra. Mercedes does not define the incident as a problem, she presents herself contradicting the decision that the

teacher has made to teach the boy only in English. She couches the contradiction in retold dialogue (p. 34, lines 18-19) and the switch to informal discourse allows her to present herself as more knowledgeable than the teacher, as she recommends the boy's "national" language as the better language of instruction. Sra. Mercedes displays strong feelings for maintaining her home language and desires that her children learn first in Spanish and then in English. She switches to a more formal style of discourse as she describes the teacher's later appreciation of her advice and the recognition of her wisdom. She offers additional support for her recommendations in the fact that her son is doing very well after reading first in Spanish (p. 34, lines 20-21). She affirms this with the interviewer in the interactional coda (p. 34, line 21) "Sí, ho sí."

Sra. Mercedes describes herself advising the teachers and attending school meetings despite difficulties with the English language and practical difficulties such as having to walk, having to attend meetings scheduled at night, and having to go without her husband. She presents herself as a parent who has been willing to modify behaviors and traditions as a wife in Mexico when necessary to help her children. Traditional respect and submission to the authority of professional educators and the awareness that she must take an active part in her children's educational experiences are both evident in Sra. Mercedes' interview. While traditional ideology of respect and esteem for teachers and schools may influence some behaviors, inhibiting direct criticism of the way teachers deal with her children, it does not restrain her efforts to support her children and to promote their academic achievement. The role of mother is important to her, and her experiences and values from her home country provide effective support when she has to deal with the difficulties inherent in raising her children in a different sociocultural environment from that which she has known.

Sra. Mercedes reflects a general set of values toward the school that are common to immigrants as they are in the process of developing social knowledge about their new society--positive expectations and a restraint from directly criticizing the authority and legitimacy of the society's institutions. Yet as her children interact in the new sociocultural situation, their experiences within the schools generate concerns for her as she senses the nonresponsiveness of those institutions to their needs.

She attempts to use knowledge and ways of coping that are a part of her background in Mexico in an effort to help them take advantage of opportunities that she never had. She presents herself as a mother who recognizes her responsibilities as a parent and one who knows that she must not leave the education of her children strictly to the teachers. She points out the problems--the need to keep close contact with her children in the school and the language difficulties they all face--and demonstrates that she is actively involved and has strong feelings about what is best for her children. She has hopes that the school can provide for her children's educational needs and can fulfill her aspirations for them. At the same time, she instills in her children values and acceptable standards of behavior that are based on her experiences in Mexico. In all of these efforts Sra. Mercedes displays none of the characteristics of marginality suggested by Park and Stonequist. She describes herself going to the school meetings "como los coyotes!" (page 34, l. 28) (like coyotes!) The expression has implications within the Mexican-United States border environment where Sra. Mercedes and her family live. She is crossing the boundary between two cultures, the Mexican home and the United States school, using her knowledge and experiences to lead her children much like the "coyotes" who lead immigrants seeking better opportunities for their families across the international border.

The analysis of Sra. Mercedes' interview demonstrates that in any particular utterance a speaker can be using language in a number of different ways, for a variety of different purposes, all at the same time. While the use of language is not a simple phenomenon to study, a functional theory of language, a theory of the social processes involved in language as a form of interaction, helps to explain the variations of style, levels of formality, the embeddings, and other features that are found within the interview. Out of these functional elements of the system of language evolve the social contexts and situation types that make up the patterns of language use in daily life.

Sra. Mercedes' responses demonstrate that aspects of the language system deployed and emphasized in any one type of language use are to an extent determined by knowledge, skills, experiences and culture. The systems of social relationships that Sra. Mercedes learned as she grew up in Mexico and those that she has learned to recognize and adapt as she emigrated to the United States are social and cultural differences that affect her

interpretation of what any language or organizational situation demands.

Language in the Sra. Mercedes interview represents her experiences, the phenomena of the world around her, and the processes of her consciousness. At the same time, language expresses her participation as a speaker in a particular speech situation and her position as an immigrant mother. These functions of language occur simultaneously. They relate what is being said to the context of the situation in which it is being said, as well as to the constantly changing, constituted contexts that evolve in the interaction.

Her responses to interview questions present various, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives of interactions with the school. In more formal responses, it appears that she acknowledges and considers legitimate the authority of school personnel and the ideology that schools, and teachers in particular, represent access to the opportunity for a better life that she wants for her children. She presents herself as cooperative and completely trusting in what the teachers do and say. Yet embedded in informal discourse, characterized by folksy asides and dialogues, she presents herself as more knowledgeable than school personnel--evaluating United States pedagogy, giving advice to teachers, and disputing teacher decisions regarding method and language of instruction.

At one level of consciousness, Sra. Mercedes, relying on her knowledge of Mexican schools, supports the power and hierarchal structure of the school and the influence of teachers. She claims that teachers know her children, often better than their parents know them, and refers to teachers as "second parents." She claims that the measure of teachers lies in the work of the students, but she does not question or doubt the competence and effectiveness of the teachers.

At another level of consciousness reflected in informal discourse that deals with day-to-day experiences in the school, Sra. Mercedes is apprehensive about what is happening. She explains that part of the reason she attends school meetings is to see what is happening to her children in school. The issue of using English rather than Spanish concerns her. She criticizes the school and teachers in informal, colloquial retellings which allow her to present evaluations in ways that are not antagonistic or confrontational. Although she is at times restricted by her lack of ability

in the language of the new environment and a lack of formal knowledge about how the system works in the United States, she actively structures the experiences of her children through her own skills and what she can learn about the schools. Her Mexican identification and experiences, rather than "troubling the mind" and "reacting against the new national identification" enable her to make successful adaptations in the host country. Despite obvious difficulties, Sra. Mercedes helps her children at home and presents herself as having the ability and knowledge to do so. She encourages them to do well, demands respect and good grades, and, as the descriptions she provides of her children's work demonstrate, spends time and effort working with them.

As with other immigrants who encounter United States institutions, she recognizes and has anxieties about differences in her own life-style and those of her children. Nevertheless, a faith in herself and folk traditions enable her to cope with and criticize her new environment and to become an active force pushing her children to succeed.[7]

NOTES

1. The Sra. Mercedes interview was selected from a series of fifteen similar interviews on the basis of theoretical sampling. Aaron Cicourel proposes that a study must be grounded in extensive field research and must begin by focusing on social interaction within organizational settings. He argues that what to focus on in these situations is operating even before going into the research site because of theoretical presumptions of the investigator. His concern is to link different levels of data and analysis to forms of reasoning employed by the researcher.

2. Distinctions between formal and informal style of language are not always clear-cut. Determinations of formal style were made after consideration of use of indefinite pronouns, deliberate tone, even pitch, word choice, and few contractions. Informal speech is characterized by contracted words, changes in voice tone and pitch, rapid speech, colloquial expressions, and informal pronouns. Changes from formal to informal speech do not correlate one-to-one with situation, person, code, or occasion but instead mark the frequent shifts among these relationships that occur in real life interactions as participants are constantly negotiating and constituting relationships, context, and interactions. The frequent shifts in formality of discourse in the Sra. Mercedes interview suggest that aspects of formality identified by Judith Irvine (1979)--conventions to the codes that organize behavior in a social setting,co-occurrence rules, positional identities, and the main focus of attention--change as individuals interact and constitute the interaction in the process. There are constraints brought to bear by these aspects of formality, but they do not determine a fixed formality or informality. Instead shifts from formal to informal or informal to formal discourse can mark changes in context within particular speech events. Irvine rightfully argues that there are various aspects of formality that must be distinguished from one another, and that although such aspects must be viewed as interdependent, being organized in one way does not always mean being organized in other ways to the same degree or at the same time. Data from the Sra. Mercedes interview confirm Irvine's observations and also suggest that organizational changes in social interaction, and thus changes in aspects of formality, occur frequently even within a particular speech event or situation and may be marked by shifts in degree of formality of discourse.

3. The student referred to in the response on page 32 lines 20-28 is "la muchacha." The student discussed in other dialogues such as the one about the math homework (p. 33, lines 15-34) and the one about language of instruction (p. 34, lines 7-22) is her junior high school son. Thus, while the interview takes place at the elementary school where Sra. Mercedes has fifth grade and kindergarten age daughters, many of her responses reflect contexts beyond the situation of the interview. Sra. Mercedes' experiences in other school contexts form background experiences for many of her responses.

4. Joel Sherzer's paper "Tellings, Retellings, and Tellings Within Tellings: The Structuring and Organization of Narrative in Kuna Indian Discourse" was helpful in determining how to classify the embedded dialogues in the Sra. Mercedes interview. At first there

seemed to be a separate embedded context in which Sra. Mercedes brought to the interview contexts and experiences from her past. However, classifying those embeddings as different kinds of retellings, primarily reporting past events not heard by the interviewer which occurred on a previous occasion in a different setting and retellings for a particular purpose such as mitigating criticism or bragging seemed to reflect the structure and organization of the interview more accurately. These retellings are a part of the larger social, organizational, situational, and interactional contexts and may serve several functions.

5. Early research by Labov reported in Sociolinguistic Patterns attempted to control context in an exploration of variations in different styles of English. He considered an interview one context in which a particular style, 'careful speech,' occurs, but elaborated his categorization to allow for 'spontaneous' speech that can occur within formal interview contexts. Labov identified five 'contextual situations' within the interview which tend to elicit casual speech: 1) Speech outside the formal interview, such as before or after the interview and interruptions, 2) remarks addressed to a third person, 3) speech not in direct response to questions, 4) childhood rhymes and customs, 5) an emotional narration such as describing a situation in which death threatened. The Sra. Mercedes interview suggests that retellings involving dialogues of past events is another.

6. M.A.K. Halliday proposes that each situation in which linguistic interaction occurs can be described structurally in terms of the type of activity going on or the social subject matter; in terms of role relationships or how participants are relating to one another; and in terms of the rhetorical function assigned to language in a particular type of situation, such as whether the speech is informal or not and so on. The choice of meanings and hence lexical and grammatical properties of an utterance or text are called upon to fit the situation. Meaning is related both to the internal structure of language and to the social contexts in which language operates. A functional approach to language means trying to find out the purposes that language serves for us and how we are able to achieve these purposes through language. It also means seeking to explain how the form of language has been determined by the functions it serves.

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TRANSCRIPT: SRA. MERCEDES INTERVIEW
FEBRUARY 1979

Interviewer (I): ¿Cuantos niños tiene?

Senora Mercedes (SM): Cuatro.

I: ¿De que grados?

SM: Del 7, 5to, 2do y kinder.

I: Muy bien ¿Y como obtiene información cerca de la escuela?

SM: Asistiendo a las juntas.

I: ¿Y hay otras formas también o no?

SM: No, yo todo el tiemp. a las juntas vengo. Me informan que va a ver una junta, y yo vengo a las juntas, casi nunca falto.

I: ¿Y por qué le gusta participar en las juntas?

SM: Ah, porque así me estoy al tanto de todo lo que pasa en la escuela ¿verdá ? -y manana o pasado pasa algo con mis hijos ¿verdá? -ya vengo yo, pues, y yo estoy al tanto de, pues, de aquí ¿verdá ? -y yo se por qué paso o no pasó ¿verdá? - y si así yo tengo la razon o no la tengo ¿verda ? - así de lo que haya pasado.

I: ¿Se siente comodo hablando con los maestros?

SM: Pues en el, cuando son latinos o que hablan español, si, pero cuando son en ingles, nomas no, me siento media corta. Porque, pues, hablando uno su idioma ¿verdá ? - se expresa mejor que, pues, en ingles, quiere decir las cosas, pero, no, no sabe.

I: ¿Y cuando hay maestros que no hablan español, como puede comunicar con ellos?

SM: Ah, por medio de la bilingüe o me traigo a la niña mia que habla ingles, ella me traduce-por medio de eso.

I: ¿Has ido a las conferencias con...?

SM: ¿No, tengo tiempo, yo porque...este, a las 12 mi marido sale a comer, así es que no tengo tiempo, a las 11:30 sale ella y, pos, no, yo le dije, 'Lo que sea juntas aquí, en la escuela, estoy cerquita, aquí vengo'. Allá a la Jr. High, si voy porque me, nomas paso el puenta ¿verdá ? - y ya me voy...pero a conferencias a otra parte, no, porque no tengo transportacion y no tengo hora para ir.

I: ¿Y las conferencias con el...los maestros?

SM: Sí, sí vengo, eso sí, sí vengo. Nunca he faltado.

I: ¿Y como sirve esos...son bien para...?

SM: Sí bien, porque a uno se da cuenta de como, que va, que aventajado está su niño, en lo que va fallando y uno tiene allí en su casa que estarle...'Andale, apurate Nestor, y ésto sacaste mal y le recomienda uno pues...

I: ¿No se sienta descomodo de pedir cosas o discutir problemas con los maestros?

SM: No, porque uno sabe como son sus hijos, los conoce; también el maestro, porque están más tiempo con el maestro, así es de que, pos, qué modo decirle, pos, 'Ni modo, mi'jo, no es así'. Porque el maestro lo conoce, y ¡Hasta más que uno! porque uno en la noche están dormidos; en la mañana almuerzan y se vienen a la escuela, duran más acá, así es de que pos...

I: ¿Que otra...en...dentro de que otros actividades ha participado?

SM: Pues, he participado en el PTA...de cuando venden rosa de segunda--ir a marcar ¿verda?-Cuando había los Boy Scouts, que hacían comida para vender, participaba en donar comida. Cuando en el PTA, también, para...que...comida, vender comida, también yo traía comida para vender, y, aquí en la escuela, también en el dose de todas las comidas, de todas las naciones, pues, que hubo un carnaval, aquí también traje comida. Y así cuando me piden, yo no puedo cooperar con mi persona, pero con algo que se ofrece, una cosa ¿verda?-que ya a beneficiar, ya a juntar ahor...este, fondos para aquí. Así si, que juntas aquí estoy. No cooperare en venir a de ayudante o voluntaria, aquí no, porque no tengo tiempo, pero a las juntas sí y en cualquier evento que van a hacer y que necesitan alguna comida, alguna cosa, sí, en eso sí coopero.

I: ¿Y qué son las condiciones que, que demande su tiempo...que, que no le...

SM: ¿...que no me permitan venir?

I: Aja.

SM: Es que, en la mañana, yo mando mis muchachos a la escuela ¿verda? Ahorita están de vacaciones. ¡Un mes de vacaciones tienen! Así es de que, yo no tengo con quien dejarlos ¿verda? ...y este...y he ... cuando ellos están en la escuela, ellos se vienen a la escuela, yo, si es día de ingles, vengo a la clase-salgo, y a la carrera a hacer de comer, porque él viene a las 12, lo más tardar a las 12:15 a comer y entonces ya, a las 12:30 sale ésta del kinder, salgo yo de la escuela, nos vamos a hacer de comer...a las 2:30...a las 2:15 sale la que está en 2do, a las 3:00 sale la que está en 2do, a las 3:00 sale la que está en 5to y así de que ya no puedo, y eso es, porque no tengo que...con quien dejarlos, ahora que saben ingles, pos, me los traigo, por eso no vengo a ayudar, de ayudante, no, yo así se lo he dicho en los papeles ¡voluntad tengo!, tiempo es lo que me falta...si en los comentarios...en los papeles que mandan, sí, voluntad tengo, tiempo es el que me falta.

I: ...es verdad...yo sí entiendo.-...Y has ido a visitar la clase ...de...de sus niños, o...?

SM: Sí.

I: ...¿y como fue eso...?

SM: Ah, pues, este...en el kinder... ¿Cuando?...el día 20 Me tocó ir con la niña antes de salir a vacaciones, allí en el kinder-no, pos, pues, pues, allí me dijo la profesora como se portaba la niña, sí-muy aventajada,pero muy despaciosa,he..y luego que le pusiera yo como reportes, así con dibujitos que empezaran con la E, así para que ellos distinguieran con que letra empezaba y fueran aprendiendo las vocales, y luego al otro día vine a, con la del 2do ano, pues, sí también, que sí es avantajada, pero platica mucho, y con la del 5to año tambien vine, pos, que tambien tiene una amiguita que platican mucho y distraen a la clase-y eso la, la manuscrita, pues no, pues, no ejercita muy bien, no suelta bien la mano y que la pusiera allí entre sus amiguitas a hablar puro ingles para que lo practicara y es que le hace falta práctica para que suelte más, he...y eso es lo que...las clases que vengo con mis niños.

I: Sí muy bien y ¿Cómo se sienta...?

SM: Pos yo, muy bien. Ah, yo le recomiendo a la profesora, pos mire, si esta niña platica mucho con otra, pos una aquí y otra por allá, así no tienen tiempo de platicar más que en el recreo. Yo también a mi muchacha le digo: 'Mire, en la clase es para estudiar', le dije, 'El recreo es para que platique, saliendo de la puerta del salón, agarrese hable, hable, hable y hable lo que quiera con la amiga. Entrando al salón a puro estudiar, porque yo no quiero ni una "N" en la, en el, dese, el reporte', le dije. 'No quiero ninguna "N", le dije, humnjé...'Yo estoy muy agusto con los profesores, todo, porque son muy buenos', le dije...Y a mi, no, yo no me enojo porque los reprenden, no, y no me enojo, porque están en sus derechos, son sus segundos papás y Ud. sabrá, Ud. es el responsable, Ud. haga lo que quiera, yo no me enojo, yo conozco a mis muchachos ¿verdad? así es de que, pos, a Ud., a Ud., se los encargo.

I: ¿Y que son las responsabilidades de los maestros para comunicar con, con los padres?

SM: A...los maestros le comunican como es el comportamiento del niño, en que materia va retrasado y...por lo que...

I: ¿ En que forma, mejor...?

SM: A pos, ellos me ensenan el, deste, sus papeles que hacen como prueba los muchachos ¿verdá?-y ya me estan ensenando lo que estan diciendo, y yo estoy viendo lo que hizo la niña, y no?

I: ¿Y los niños llevan trabajo a la casa también para hacer?

SM: Sí, sí llevan trabajo a veces. Llevan los libros que sacan de la biblioteca pa' que los lean, llegan pos, 'Ey', le digo, 'A mí no me dejaron esos libros' le dije 'No me dejaron tarea los libros', les digo. 'Así, vealos, deles una repasada y luego se va a jugar.' Así de que pos, y luego la tarea-'hagamela', le digo, 'Ahorita', le dije. Porque se agarran jugando jugando y en la noche quieren hacer la tarea, su papá les dice, 'Apaga la luz', que ya no hicieron tarea. Otro día, en la mañana ahí estan a la carrera, ni se les entiende, no. 'Primero llega uno de la escuela, a hacer su tarea y ya tiene toda la tarde pa' jugar, ya no, sin pendiente', le dije. Sí, sí llevan tarea.

I: ¿Y es trabajo, ese trabajo, es una forma de informar a Uds. que están haciendo en la escuela?

SM: Sí, humn, sí, porque también ellos me preguntan a mí '¡'amá mira a esto!' Una le mas o menos les explica, pues, lo que quiere decir...El muchacho esta en el, la Jr. High... pos cuando empezo... '¡'amá que pos las divisiones!' No se el. Aquí las hacen de patas pa' 'rriba. No se el. Aquí que ponen la resta y luego no-ponen lo que sale, despues las restan, les dije, '¡Puros números!', les dije, - 'Alla en el pensamiento se hace la resta y ya nomás se pone lo que sale.' En México, pos así ensenan. Hace uno la multiplicación, la divide, la multiplica y a luego...le hace la resta, luego se baja el otro. No, aquí llenan el papel de ¡Puros números!- Ai no, y yo de primero no le entendía, y ya despues le agarré la onda - ¡Ha pos multiplican y ponen aquí, después le restan y ponen aca lo que restan y luego le bajan...y así le dicen, - sí, pos así le ayudaba. Primero no entendía, pero a mi modo, yo se lo explicaba, le dije, 'Mira mi'jo, sabiendo tu las tablas, haces cualquier cuenta', le dije, 'Cualquier cuenta', le dije, 'Porque si no sabes tu las tablas, ahi te quedas', le dije. Estudia primero las tablas'. No, pos sí.

I: ¿Entonces los ninos hablan de las escuelas, de los probleas alla?

SM: Sí, sí, no yo, sí, yo les he dicho. 'Mira mi'jo', como el que está allá; va a cumplir 13 años el que esta alla. 'Mira mi'jo'. No se yo, porque nunca he estado en las escuelas de aquí ¿verdad? - pero pues ruidos se oyen ¿verdad? de que hay unos que sonsacan los otros que pa''llá, que pa' ca y que pleitos, que recogen a todos y se los llevan, y le dije, 'Mira mi'jo, hay unos ninos más sobresalidos que...que los otros', le dije. 'Más como...más plebes, pues, más', le digo, 'Peleoneros, buscabullas, que están buscando pleito. Y si ves que están peleando-'Haste a un lado', le dije. 'Porque llega la patrulla y tú nomás por bobo te llevan', le dije. 'Que no, que tú veas, déjalos tú, vente', le dije. 'No, porque yo soy la que me voy a

mortificar, hum, y sí, a veces me llega...'Fíjate mamá que estaban peleando'. 'Ah, nomás vea de lejecitos, pero véngase, no se me meta, sí, sí, ella me dice, me platica.

I: ¿Si hubo unos problemas, un problema en la escuela, como va a comunicar con la escuela?

SM: Ah, si hay un problema allá, ellos me hablan a mí. Si es con mi'jo - ¿verda? -- si es con mi'jo, hablan conmigo, pero hasta ahorita no he tenido problemas yo. No, porque yo, cuando voy a las juntas allá... está allí la profesora de matemáticas y ella me dijo que su hijo va muy bien. También con la profesora de lectura, como es latino él - ¿verdá? - y pos él, pos, pronto aprendió el inglés, pero sabe leer... Pero como dice la profesora, hay muchas cosas que él leé, pero no las comprende. No saben el significado de aquella palabra y le dijo, pos, sí, él quería estudiar el inglés todo, yo le dije: ¡No, primero el español, tu idioma de nacion, y despues el inglés! No, ya me lo agarró esa profesora de lectura. Va mu-u-uy avenjado ese muchacho, ¡Sí no sí! -Yo voy a las juntas allá. Ya sea en el día o en la noche, a veces me voy a pie, ahí por la carretera, agarro el puente y yo voy. Me llevo mi sarta de muchachos - si en la noche. Si él no quiere llevarme, ho... pos yo no ocupo... ¡Vámonos! Al cabo, el que nada debe, nada teme ¿verdá? - Sí, vamos mis cuatro muchachos. Voy como los coyotes...

I: Que bueno...Y en la clase de inglés, hablan Uds. ...

SM: ¿Inglés?

I: 'cerca de la escuela, de estos problemas de la escuela, de...

SM: No, hablamos de nosotros...de nosotros...de, de nosotros... de los idiomas, do como se pronuncia una cosa, que porque, y así pues. Y la profesora a veces nos habla en inglés, y ay, le digo. 'No, pos...hableme espanol tantito'...porque, yo luego, nos pregunta de, por ejemplo, para que nosotros contestemos en inglés, que que hicimos el fin de semana, pero pues como le digo, a mí me da verguenza. Pos unas palabras no se, ni modo de decir una aquí, otra allá. 'Mejor no', le digo. 'Lo que quiera en español'. Ahorita todavía no le hablo inglés. No, y así, pues...y un día estuvo... nos estaba explicando en caso de un incendio...como llamar a los bomberos, en caso de, de la carretera, se quedaba su carro, como llamar a la grúa lo que iba a preguntar el de la grúa, como íbamos a contestar ¿verda? Así es de, ella iba a ser el de la grúa y nosotros íbamos a ser el del carro. Y nosotros llamos por teléfono y ellos nos contestaba y nos preguntaba y nosotros... 'Lúrdes', nos decía, en qué sitio estaba el carro, y ya uno le

tenía que decir, por ejemplo...A mi me dijo que en donde estaba mi carro, yo le dije. 'Street, Hollister Street, one bloque al sur de...al sur de la escuela Nestor' ¿verdá? Entonces dice. 'De que marca es su carro', me dijo en inglés, ah, le dije, 'Es Datsun, éste naiteen, naiteen seventy nine', le digo...'Del año' 'De qué color', dice, 'Azúl' 'De que estilo 'Sport', así por eso ¿verdá? y luego dice, 'y sí dice la grua que en media hora o un tiempo largo,' ah, pues, entonces 'cuelguen', dice. 'Porque hay otras gruas'. Y así no explica. Pues en caso de un accidente o algo ¿verdá? Y dice lo que debe tener; pero en inglés, nos está ahí, y una que otra palabrita, pues la agarra uno ¿verdá y dice, 'Debe tener estos números ahí cerca de su teléfono' ¿verda? porque no sabe uno lo que pase, y así nos enseña cosas, pues.

I: Muy bien. ¿Y ésta también es una oportunidad de hablar con los otros padres...las otras madres ¿verdad? - acerca de los niños o de...tienen...Uds. hablan uno al otro dentro del break?

SM: Sí, sí, hablamos de los maridos, hablamos de la comida, en la hora del café, de los niños, de uno. Y bueno, si...

I: Es una buena forma de comunica verdá?

SM: Oh, sí-humm...

I: ¿Has asistido a las juntas de PTA también?

SM: Sí, yo pertenezco al PTA. Aja.

I: ¿Y cómo se sienta de esas juntas?

SM: Ah pos es que es muy, muy conveniente para uno ¿verdá? Y mucho provecho, porque en esas juntas ¿verdá? -para...un niño que le hace falta esto otro, que no tengan sus padres, entonces el PTA ¿verdá? - el PTA le da. Por ejemplo: Hace un año que mi muchacho fue a una semana al...a 'campar y Paula García nos dijo que el sí no teníamos, pues, ese, sleeping bag donde duerme, pues surrones, y pos, que el PTA le podría, que si no teníamos para pagar la semana allá de que el PTA podría, y pos a veces a uno le da verguenza ¿verdá? - pedir ¿verdá? - pero eso, por ejemplo, como dice me marido. 'Eso lo dejo para cuando yo ya de plano no pueda trabajar, sí por eso, vale más estar guardando ¿verda que nunca se le ha ofrecido a él, Dios quiera y que no se le ofrezca y dice 'Pos eso lo dejo para cuando de plano no, yo no pueda trabajar, entonces sí pido ayuda, pero mientras no '...Sí, sí, a mí me gusta.

I: ¿Pero, puede ganar información también allá?

SM: Sí, sí.

I: ¿...de los programas?

SM: De los programas, sí, sí. Cuando allá se abrió el PTA, allá en la Jr. High, sí fuimos. Muchos, muchos del PTA fuimos. Yo estoy aquí, en el PTA y estoy allá. Aja, también en las de esas ventas de ropa

de segunda, artículos de segunda del PTA para recabar fondo, yo he estado también marcando ropa en el PTA. Sí, pos en lo que se ofrezca, le dije. 'Teniendo yo tiempo, sí.

I: ¿Y cómo...el padre también asiste a...?

SM: No, él no, no tiene tiempo. El no tiene tiempo. Porque sale muy temprano, a las 6:30 ¿verdá? Así es de que él trabaja, y él es mayordomo. Salen los trabajadores y él le sigue. Por eso no tiene tiempo. Yo sí, a veces él se queda y yo me vengo a las juntas. Sí.

I: ¿Hay oportunidades de, de junta con los maestros o hablar con los maestros aparte de la escuela?

SM: Húnca he hablado. No, nunca, nunca ha habido motivo ¿verdá? Porque cuando hay motivo, pos que los niños se pelearon, voy voy a ver al maestro y a platicar con él por qué motivo ¿verdá? Pero nunca ha habido motivo para venir a hablar con el profesor.

I: ¿Y los maestros no asisten a las juntas de la comunidad, como a la iglesia o...a la...

SM: Humm. No.

I: ¿Y no participan en las actividades de la comunidad?

SM: No,pues yo no he visto, Ahno. Yo en la iglesia he visto a puros padres de familia. Maestros no. No. No, casi nunca he visto.

I: ¿Y otra gente que trabajan en las escuelas?

SM: No, padres de familia. Padres de familia.

I: ¿Qué otras actividades tiene afuera de la...?

SM: Ni una, ni una. Nomás los miercoles llevar...

I: Social...

SM: ...llevar a mis ninos a la doctrina más que aprendan a rezar, el catecismo para hacer su primera comunión. No más...humm... no mas...De ahí en fuera, no, no, nada.

I: ¿Y el niño de quinto grado, está en actividades de como el baseball?

SM: No, no, porque no tiene tiempo. Porque su papá cuando sale de trabajar se lo lleva pa' que le ayude. No, no sabe él jugar. así es de que pos...ni modo.

I: Sí. ¿Hay otras condiciones que, que no se dejan participar en las clases o en, en las actividades en la escuela? Ha mencionado de tiempo y eso es una cosa grade. ¿Pero hay otras cosas que...

SM: No, no más eso, mis ni...jos. Porque no tengo con quien dejarlos y yá. No, no mas eso...y yá. Porque tiene uno que estar allí en su trabo, el hombre que saliera a trabajar y no volviera hasta en la tarde - tenía yo el día de mi parte ¿verdá?-pero como pos... viene aquí...no.

I: ¿Cuando está en la clase o está visitando, está haciendo evaluaciones de la clase o de los maestros?

SM: No, porque la evaluación está en el trabajo que hace mi muchacho- ¿verda? - Allí esta porque el maestro ensena - y en uno está si aprende o no aprende, esa es la evaluación; si aprendió, claro que el maestro enseno, y si no aprendio, es que, es que la muchacha se distrae por otra parte. Allí es donde evalua uno lo que ensenan los profesores.

I: ¿Y algunas yeces se sienta como los maestros o gente en la escuela estan evaluando los padres?

SM: No, pos, los profesores a veces que...a veces que mandan el papel que si va a asistir uno al allí. Y son muy pocos los padres que viene. Pos se, porque tambien al maestro se le caen las alas del corazón de que manda a uno el papel ¿verdá? - y pos, no viene, uno que otro, yo creo que a los padres no les interesa el muchacho, como va el muchacho. Sí, eso.

I: ¿Conoce a uno de esta gente que no viene?

SM: No, pos no.

I: ¿No sabe por qué no viene?

SM: No. No sé... a veces, allí tengo una vecina, a veces viene a las juntas, y a veces no viene. Pero...pos ahí cada quien. Si no tiene voluntad de ir, pos que no vaya. Cada quien. Porque así a uno, si quiera, lo toman en cuenta; va uno a las juntas. ¡Hombre! Que la senora Fulana viene a las juntas y...pos, ¿verdá? Si no viene, pos que no venga. Que nos dicen, que convídala, pos sí, le digo. 'Fulana, no vas a ir a la junta'. 'Ay, que voy hacer esto, lo otro'. A, bueno. Así es.

I: ¿Y habla con esta vecina de las juntas o...?

SM: No, una, una que estaba, está conmigo en inglés, es otra que a veces, a veces no tiene tiempo, ella tambien no tiene ¿iempo o porque ella está en cinta, en cinta, sí en cinta y le da verguenza y por, por verguenza no viene, por eso.

I: ¿Y sus participaciones en estas actividades en la escuela ha cambiado con los niños...o es diferente con esta nina...que...

SM: No, igual. No, con todas son igual. Igual, igual, igual. Porque la maestra que tiene esta, ha tenido a las tres ninas mias. unhuh, a las tres ninas mias, sí. Y luego la que tuvo de

kinder, la que está en segundo, tuvo a dos niños míos.

I: ¿Entonces Uds. tienen mucho tiempo aquí en la comunidad?

SM: Sí, sí. Seis años, seis años, son seis años. Así es de que, pos, sí, sí, conocemos bien a los profesores.

I: Sí, sí. ¿Y los profesores están los mismos también por lo más o cambian mucho?

SM: No ya han cambiado, porque estaba...la que tuvo mi'jo en el tercer año, no está, se casó y ya se fue. La que tuvo mi niña en primer año, la más grandecita, también se fue. Pos, son profesores nuevos. No más, no más, ésa, la que tiene a las tres niñas, la que tiene en kinder, es la misma. La que tiene ahorita mi'ja la de quinto año también fue maestra del otro y de ella. Sí, hay varias.

I: ¿Y los padres que están participando son más omenos los mismos o ellos cambian también?

SM: También cambia. Es que a veces no tienen tiempo, pues no tienen tiempo.

I: ¿Cuales de las actividades se parece lo más importante para saber como va el progreso de los niños?

SM: Pos eso de venir a ver su...de venir a hablar con el maestro y ya darse cuenta de porque el maestro no ensena su trabajo del muchacho. Y ya uno, pos, ya va, sabe uno más o menos como va. Esto es lo más importante...Asistir a las juntas de...de cuando el maestro cita a los padres-que venga. Esos es lo más importante, porque así ya se da uno cuenta como se porta su hijo, como va de aplicado, retrasado. Esos es lo más importante para mi, porque es lo que yo recomiendo a mis muchachos.

I: ¿Qué piensa de ésta, estas preguntas que ha mandado a todos los padres para...?

SM: Está bueno, sí, está bueno. Unhun, sí está bueno, todos los ahí está bueno. Muy bien está porque mejor, mejor...bueno... A mi se me hace esta escuela mejor, porque mis hijos no sabían hablar inglés verdá?- y si no sabían hablar inglés con quien se van a entender verdá? Si hubiera pura gente que hablara éste, inglés, ellos no se iban a entender verdá? Por eso mismo esta escuela es muy buena, porque así hay se van a enseñar tanto- el americano que quiera hablar español, puede hablarlo verdá? Ya salen de aquí bilingües verdá? Ya, pos ya aprendieron el español...pos 'hora vamos a seguir el inglés. Y así mis muchachos aprendieron el español, vamos a seguirle el inglés, porque en los estudios superioreses puro inglés, ya no hay bilingüe, hasta en la junior high. Sí muy buena, muy bueno el programa que tiene aquí en la escuela Nestor. Yo estoy muy contenta con las profesores, el director, todos son muy buenos, muy buenos, uhun, muy bien.

I: Muy bien. Creo que Uds. son muy buenos padres también.

SM: Pos hasta donde se puede, porque nomás no nos hagan, porque entonces, el...no, uno trata tambien. No dejarle toda la tarea al profesor ¿verda? Ayudarle al profesor tambien allá, porque así como él nos ayuda, nos ayuda en, en que los enseña ¿verda? Y que lidéa la mayor parte del día con ellos ¿verda? Así van los muchachos a la casa, entonces ayudarle al profesor, a que ellos tienen que hacer la tarea ayudarles, explicarles ¿verda?

I: ¿Hay ganas de participar en una otra forma que ahora no es la realidad o quiere otra forma de participación...ahora no...?

SM: No. Así está bien. Así está bien, sí. Así está bien. Yo, yo le digo, pos, en la escuela no ayudaré, pero en las juntas sí voy a darme cuenta de todo. Así allí me dicen ésto y ésto pasa y este dinero para ésto y este dinero para el otro, y así, así estoy muy agusto.

I: Sí. Muy bien, muy bien y muchas gracias.

SM: Ah, no hay de qué.

I: Para el tiempo que...

SM: No. No le hace, yo ya sabía, ya sabía que, tenía que este tiempo dedicarselo a Ud. Ahorita voy a traer mis dos muchachas, las otras dos porque van a bailar.

I: ¿A la clase de bailar?

SM: Ajá, sí.